

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An endoscope system comprising:

a first endoscope having a soft section that comprises a small-diameter portion formed on the distal side of the soft section and a large-diameter portion which is formed on the operator side thereof opposite to the small-diameter portion and whose outer diameter is larger than the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion;

a second endoscope that can share the same light source unit or video processor with the first endoscope and that has a soft section whose outer diameter is substantially the same over the whole length thereof;

a third endoscope that can share the same light source unit or video processor with the first endoscope, and that has a soft section whose outer diameter is substantially the same over the whole length thereof and is substantially equal to or smaller than the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope.

2. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of at least the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope and is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft

section of the third endoscope.

3. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of at least the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope and is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

4. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of at least the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is equal to or smaller than the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope and is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

5. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of at least the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is equal to or smaller than the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope and is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

6. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the

first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

7. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

8. An endoscope system according to Claim 2, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

9. An endoscope system according to Claim 2, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

10. An endoscope system according to Claim 3, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

11. An endoscope system according to Claim 3, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the

first endoscope is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

12. An endoscope system according to Claim 4, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

13. An endoscope system according to Claim 4, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

14. An endoscope system according to Claim 5, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

15. An endoscope system according to Claim 5, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is equal to or larger than the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope.

16. An endoscope system according to Claim 1, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the

first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope, and the outer diameter of the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope.

17. An endoscope system according to Claim 2, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope, and the outer diameter of the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope.

18. An endoscope system according to Claim 3, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope, and the outer diameter of the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope.

19. An endoscope system according to Claim 4, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter

of the soft section of the third endoscope, and the outer diameter of the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope.

20. An endoscope system according to Claim 5, wherein the outer diameter of the small-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the third endoscope, and the outer diameter of the large-diameter portion of the first endoscope is substantially equal to the outer diameter of the soft section of the second endoscope.